



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

experience of friendship, the meaning that art held for her, her first love, her final finding of herself. To one of Violette's type finding oneself is no easy process. It means the attainment of some sort of satisfaction in the search for larger life and for the assurance of personal worth. Such satisfaction may be attained in despite of the dread of annihilation. The consciousness of life as something larger than personality may triumph over the consciousness of death. Just how this may be it is not easy to explain. The story of Violette shows with poignant clearness that it is so.

There is thus a radical difference of spirit between Mrs. Walling's work and that of the epicurean Pater. Violette, unlike Marius, has a soul, and not merely the adumbration of one. Her story is warm with life and not with the semblance of it. Violette, to be sure, feels that life is precious because of its fragility. But the thought breeds only that wholesome sadness at the thought of death which all must feel—the house of mourning is better than the house of mirth. It does not induce the chill melancholy of pessimism. The meaning of life is service; if then death follows, ending all, nevertheless one may attain here on earth to something not wholly earthy.

Violette, too, can attach meaning to beauty without making beauty in itself the end to be sought. "When another autumn came she watched the fall of leaves—the crimson whirl in the air, the brilliant maples grouped about the white birch trees which were being stripped before her eyes by the breeze. . . . Why could not all dying be beautiful like this? When her time came, she, too, could deck herself out marvellously! She could summon more thoughts from out the recesses of her mind, memories that should be more than memories, charged with a vital force to persist, to act; she could array herself at the end in the full flowering of all that had ever begun in her . . . she would surrender all, let them be carried out by gentle winds to impregnable regions while she herself sank to the ground a symbol, a token, a pledge of love and life, like each brilliant leaf then descending."

---

A JOURNAL OF IMPRESSIONS IN BELGIUM. By May Sinclair. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915.

To be sincere is a difficult art. Most of us are content with a very moderate measure of truth-telling because we lack the skill or the courage to attempt more. Even in matters of fact it is notoriously difficult to achieve both frankness and accuracy. When the subject matter is what we are supposed to know most immediately and most thoroughly—namely, our own sensations and impressions—the case becomes almost desperate. It is doubtless, in part, because of the sheer difficulty of truth-telling that we are inclined to respect the man of few words rather than the man of many, and to distrust

him who talks much about his own moods or motives. The would-be sincere person who is garrulous attempts too much; he is apt to tell what everybody knows, or what is misleading.

This, which is true of truth, is also true of fiction. The conventional romancer simplifies matters for himself by adopting as his own the conventionally romantic point of view, and thus he achieves without effort a more or less impressive effect of sincerity. The less conventional and more imaginative romancer gives way to the "literary sense"; he builds up for himself, as well as for his creations, a personality that is of only transitory existence—a personality not really viable. He offers, as normal human experiences, impressions and reactions such as never were on sea or land. The realist, on the other hand, is prone to deny that he possesses any personality worth mentioning—which is annoying and unfair to the reader. Moreover, when he does this, he, too, unduly simplifies the problem, shirking the true difficulty of being sincere.

But there are persons who possess in a high degree the gift and the art of sincere expression. In conversation, every casual remark of theirs bears the stamp of a genuine individuality. In recording facts, they ingeniously and ingenuously tell just what they know—no more and no less. In imaginative writing they are true both to their own selves and to reality. In this way they succeed in being both original and truthful, both normal and unique, and, if they are great enough, both personal and universal in their appeal.

One of these gifted persons is May Sinclair, author of *The Divine Fire*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Prodigal* and other novels of equally fine quality; and her book of impressions from Belgium is in its way the most genuine and vital piece of writing that has come from the war area. The author went to Belgium as a member of an ambulance corps which was taken into the service of the Belgian Red Cross. Her opportunities for observation were, indeed, rather limited. The most exciting adventures were not hers, nor did the choice bits of inside information fall to her lot. All this she frankly acknowledges. "This is a journal of impressions," she writes, "and it is nothing more. It will not satisfy people who want accurate and substantial information about Belgium or about the war or about field ambulances and hospital work, and do not want to see any of these things 'across a temperament.'" Furthermore, with an almost desperate-seeming sincerity the author calls attention to *lacunæ* in her narrative, brusquely corrects in footnotes hasty statements set down in the text, confesses to a lack of information or to an uncertainty regarding dates. This conscientiousness occasionally leads to blindness. It is rather baffling, for instance, to be told that the author met a certain "Mr. ———" at such a time and under such and such circumstances, and then to be informed in a note that the author is not sure after all that the man in question was really "Mr. ———". It may be illogical, yet it is natural, to

feel that though we may not know who " Mr. ——— " is, we ought not to be cheated out of the satisfaction of knowing that the person Miss Sinclair saw was really he. But in general the absence of anything like literary puttying or veneering serves merely to enhance the distinguishing quality of Miss Sinclair's narrative—its psychological accuracy. To attempt any summary of the author's impressions would be to represent them unfairly. It is enough to say that Miss Sinclair records perceptions of extraordinary keenness; that her point of view is normal without being in the least commonplace; that, seeking no false " unity of tone," she describes unmistakably true reactions, not only making us feel " the pity of it," but compelling us to realize that if we were actual witnesses of Belgium's distress we should sometimes be unable to feel the expected emotion at all.

---

SOCIALIZED GERMANY. By Frederic C. Howe, LL.D. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915.

The most recent of Frederic C. Howe's treatises upon various practical aspects of political science, *Socialized Germany*, is one of those books which have been belated by the war. It was originally intended as a peace book and not at all as a war book. In a sense, however, the publication of this work at the present moment is timely. It is true enough that State socialism " has largely made Germany what she is, a menace and a model to other nations, a problem to statesmen of other countries "—a demonstrator of efficiency, if not " a pathfinder in social reform." Some knowledge of German institutions, certainly, is desirable; disapproval of German world policy should lead no one to the hasty conclusion that the German scheme of things is wrong from the ground up.

It is equally true that social and economic problems in America are pressing hard for solution. Our public domain is exhausted—or withheld from use. The West is no longer a land of golden opportunity. Monopolies in industry threaten to grow beyond the Government's power to control them. Unemployment is more or less chronic. In the cities there appears to be a lack of skilled administrators and an absence of social vision. In view of all this, Germany, a nation which has solved in her own way many of the problems which confront us, is surely worth studying.

No one doubts that America will successfully cope with those problems to the solution of which the traditional *laissez-faire* philosophy may prove inadequate. There are indeed many indications of growing liberality and enlightenment in American life. Just at present we are beginning to see in the colleges young men and women more or less imbued with new ideas and ideals. We are beginning to see in affairs a somewhat broader and more tolerant spirit. The admired type of successful business man is no longer the mere accu-